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*ARTICLES ON RELIGION IN PERIODICALS*<sup>1</sup>

Periodical articles on religion are like the plague of frogs in Egypt not only in number but in the fact that they appear in the most unlikely, not to say unsuitable, places. A special apparatus is indispensable to all who have any reason to try to keep track of them. Mr. Ernest Richardson, formerly librarian of Hartford Theological Seminary, now of Princeton University, an experienced hand, with the co-operation of several other bibliographers, has undertaken the laborious task of preparing a special index to this literature on the general plan of Poole's Index. The volume before us includes articles on religion published in the ten years, 1890 to 1899 inclusive, in not far from fifteen hundred periodicals. At a rough estimate, making no subtraction for repetition, the whole number of entries is between 60,000 and 70,000.

The index arrangement has wisely been preferred to any scheme of systematic classification. To each entry title is subjoined a short definition and a reference to some convenient Encyclopaedia in which the user may find general information on the subject. The definitions are sometimes inadequate or incorrect, as when Shamanism is described as "Religion of the fisheries of the Arctic region," or Halakah as "Jewish literary work (2 forms)," and the references not infrequently to sources of no credit or long out of date; but these shortcomings do not impair the usefulness of the Index, to which presumably no one will resort for first aid to the ignorant.

The distribution of articles under the sub-headings of the longer titles is not always well-considered: for example, under Armenia is a special head, "Armenia (massacre)," yet many articles on this subject are not to be found there, but under the

<sup>1</sup>An Alphabetical Subject Index and Index Encyclopaedia to Periodical Articles on Religion, 1890-1899. Compiled and edited by Ernest Cushing Richardson. 8vo, pp. 42+1168. New York: Published for the Hartford Seminary Press by Charles Scribner's Sons. [Copyright 1907.] Price \$10 net.

main entry, apparently because the word "massacre" does not occur in the title. Articles referring to Regensburg are divided, on no discoverable principle, between "Ratisbon" and "Regensburg," and the cross-reference runs only one way. The main classification itself is sometimes erroneous: "Occultism," e.g., is so defined as to exclude magic, but an article on the history of magic is entered under Occultism, doubtless because the title runs, "*Les sciences occultes au xviii si cle.*"

Even the simplest index classification of articles, many of which are known only by title, few of which can possibly have been read—a classification mechanically made by cataloguers—cannot help putting many articles in a wrong place; or at least not in the place where a scholar would most naturally look for them. The only remedy for this state of things is either an objectionable duplication of entries or a very free use of cross-references. In the volume before us cross-references are used much too sparingly: under "Animal worship," e.g., there is no reference to "Totemism," and conversely; under "Religion" there is none to "Paganism," yet two or three important articles on the history of religion are buried under the latter entry.

In conclusion it is perhaps not inappropriate to warn the student or the "general reader," who cannot for himself distinguish the obsolete, the void, and the fatuous from the live and significant, that such an index as this is a dangerous tool. Indeed, it might be maintained without paradox that nothing contributes more to the perpetuation of antiquated error and humbug than indexes—especially to periodical literature—and the subject-catalogues of great libraries; for they make it possible to "read up" and "write up" anything in heaven or earth, without the painful necessity of knowing anything about it.